

Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Notes for Meeting #9
November 21, 2013

Committee Members Present: Co-chair Barbara Wright, Bill Farmer, Juli Farris, Thomas Goldstein, Diana Kincaid, Yalonda Gill Masundire, Michael Maddux, Brice Maryman, Mustapha Math

Welcoming Remarks

Barbara Wright welcomed the committee members and the public to the ninth meeting of the Parks Legacy Citizens Advisory Committee.

Public Comments

Weston Brinkley: The Green Seattle Partnership is \$3 million behind in capital funding – it is being underfunded by \$500,000 per year, and each year invasives grow and undo the work, costing more money in the long run and making parks less inviting and less accessible. GSP needs \$3.4 million per year – please add it to the funding package.

Barbara Feasey: Thank you for the hard work the Committee is doing. The Woodland Park Zoo is committed to being an active partner to reach success. Two Zoo projects were removed from the list in the Chair's recommendation. They are unique projects: the Day/Night Building and the Tropical Rainforest Building. They are standard major maintenance needs, including roof repair, that are not a good fit for philanthropy, as philanthropy is more for new, fun projects. Please add these two buildings back to the project list.

Committee Discussion of Investment Initiative Priority Ranking

- Tonight is not the final Committee discussion – but the start to getting agreement on a list of projects for the funding measure.
- The subcommittee lists were used as the basis for the co-chairs recommendation.
- Changes reflect the co-chairs decision to bundle similar initiatives into packages which mixed some priority rankings.
- Also, some initiative names have changed.

Major Maintenance; Magnuson Park

- The Existing Subcommittee asked staff to look at the major maintenance project list and identify projects that could be funded through other means, such as partnerships and grants – 11 projects were identified with a cost of \$46.4 million.
- The purpose of doing so was so the top of the priority list wasn't taken up too much with major maintenance (when initiatives # 1 and 6 were the top projects).
- For Building 2 at Magnuson Park, the majority of the funding moves out of the initiative and becomes a partnership opportunity, similar to other buildings at Magnuson; (the Mountaineers

invested \$6 million to renovate their building, with no city funding); \$2 million remains in the Asset Management Plan (part of initiative #1) to stabilize the building.

- A total of \$19.6 million now funds both initiatives #1 and 6.
- In addition to the Mountaineers project, the Arena Sports building at Magnuson and the Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing center are examples of partnerships renovating Parks buildings; the capital investment for these projects is amortized over the long term, requiring long-term leases with partners to work.

Green Seattle Partnership

- \$11.3 is the current funding in the CIP – this funding is not changing and reflects the long range GSP plan.

Total Cost for Initiative #1: Reduce Major Maintenance Backlog

- Should #1 be \$15.5 or \$19.6? The difference being the higher number would reduce the \$267 million backlog more quickly.
- Comments in support of \$19.6:
 - We need to be responsible stewards of what we have.
 - Should be higher -- \$27 million.
 - Need to address infrastructure backlog.
 - Larger cost up-front results in lower cost over time.
- Comments in support of \$15.5:
 - Leave \$15.5 in #1 and put the additional \$4.1 at the bottom of the priority list.
 - \$15.5 is right for the top of the list – going to \$19.6 bumps a lot of other important needs from the package.
 - Need to balance major maintenance with other needs; We need places for people to go and something for them to do and a way to get there.
 - Consider the public testimony about a lot of things other than major maintenance.
- Committee Recommendation – discuss again at Dec. 5 Committee meeting.

Decision: Should investment initiatives 1, 2, 4 and 5 be established as the base package?

- Comments against this composition:
 - \$2.6 million for community centers—will it increase hours system-wide?
 - There is a high cancellation rate at community centers—don't pay for programs that have cancellation.
- Comments for this composition:
 - There's a basic staffing problem at community centers.
 - Ability to access community centers is a big deal for young people.

- What's the point of having a park system if people, especially young people, can't access it?
 - Community centers play an important role in social and human services, and provide a safe place for people to go.
- Committee Recommendation: establish initiatives 1, 2, 4, and 5 as the base package.

Decision: Should investment initiatives 18, 27, 33, 34, and 36 be removed from further consideration?

- Comments against removing #36:
 - Part of argument for removing #36 was the projects were included in the asset management plan. Since these projects have been identified as partnership funded—so we should at least keep this at the bottom of the list. *[staff note: part of this is on the asset management plan and part is on the partnerships list]*
- Comments for removing #36:
 - We should look at the Magnuson Advisory Committee's positions.
- Committee Recommendation: Remove initiatives 18, 27, 33, 34, and table initiative.

Decision: Should select investment initiatives be bundled as follows?

- **Park Activation and Safety: Combine 17A, 24, 26, 32 and 35?**
 - Comments
 - There could be unintended consequences if P-Patches aren't funded citywide.
 - Comments for bundle
 - P-Patch initiative activates parks and benefits more people simple those who farm an individual piece of land.
 - *[Staff comment: we heard a lot of support for P-Patches at the public hearings.]*
 - Amounts were relatively small, so didn't impact subcommittee prioritization too much.
 - Comments against bundle
 - Should #35 Urban Food be packaged with Get Moving and other health-related initiatives?
 - There have been significant changes to subcommittee priorities in this bundle.
 - Committee Recommendation: Group the investment initiatives into a park activation bundle.
- **Activities for All: Combine 19, 20, 21, and 22?**
 - Comments against bundle
 - Seems like this should be General Fund-supported. What happens when levy ends and these programs are not supported?
 - Committee Recommendation: Group these investment initiatives into an Activities for All bundle.
- **New Parks: Combine 14 and 15?**

- Comments
 - Would like to move Smith Cove up in priority, if possible.
 - OK with grouping, but developing land-banked sites should be higher.
- Committee Recommendation: Bundle these investment initiatives into a New Parks bundle.

Decision: Should #10 Address Property Encroachments be combined with #1 Address Asset Management Priorities?

- Comments for combining the initiatives
 - This is an important priority.
- Comments against combining the initiatives
 - I think the philosophy makes sense, but it is moving way up in priority while the \$4.6 million for major maintenance falls to the bottom of the list.
- Committee Recommendation: table this decision.

Decision: Should the following changes be made to these investment initiatives?

- #7 Environmental Sustainability Fund: Increase the amount from \$1.3 million to \$1.5 million to add in an education component that would be eliminated with the removal of initiative #27.
 - Comments
 - In response to a committee question about the difference between #27 Environmental Innovations and #23 Provide for Environmental Education, staff noted #27 would fund capital 'demonstration projects' while #23 would fund environmental educational programming.
 - Committee Recommendation: increase amount to \$1.5 million
- #8 Major Projects Opportunity Challenge Fund: The chairs concur with the recommendation of the Existing Subcommittee to increase the funding for this initiative from \$3 million to \$5 million. The narrative would be changed to more broadly include the projects that could be funded with this initiative, such as off leash areas, athletic fields and specialty gardens.
 - Comments
 - Time frame is "mixed"—why? [*staff response: can work with short-term or long-term funding*]
 - Committee Recommendation: Increase amount to \$5 million
- #17 Provide for Maintenance of the New Seattle Waterfront Park Spaces: The chairs' recommendation divides this initiative into two, 17A: Activation and 17B: Maintenance. This more clearly describes the Central Waterfront funding needs. In addition, 17A is included with the Activation bundle (see recommendation 3a above.)
 - Comments
 - Staff note: this money for maintenance and activation won't be needed for three years, and until then it would be used to develop the land-banked sites.
 - We should add language to better explain this division of funds.
 - Committee Recommendation: split funding between activation and maintenance

- #30 Greenways and Safe Walkways with SDOT and Others: The chairs recommendation changes the title of this initiative to Activating and Connecting Greenways. The narrative is amended to emphasize that the funding is for activation, such as buskers, and neighborhood festivals. The initiative could also fund making safe, inviting connections between parks and greenways, through as crosswalks, benches and entryways. The rewritten narrative makes clear the funding is not for building greenways in streets, as that is a transportation department responsibility that can be expanded through transportation funding mechanisms.
 - Comments
 - Agree we should make a distinction that this is not related to SDOT, but this should also focus on creating safe walkways through parks.
 - Should be about safety, but not about building roads.
 - Committee Recommendation: Change title.

Decision: Should the attached prioritization of investment initiatives be the Committee’s December 2013 recommendation?

- Comments
 - \$60 million is a significant increase.
 - “Parking lot” items that were tabled were #6 Eliminate Major Maintenance Backlog, #10 Address Property Encroachments, and #36 Magnuson Master Plan Improvements. Those items are now at the bottom of the list.
 - Would like to see “New Parks” moved up next to Activation bundle. This land is just sitting there, and something needs to be done.
 - Support for keeping Park Acquisition Fund above “New Parks”, because it is a matching fund, and if we do not fund it we will be leaving money on the table.
 - Problem is that we buy new things, and don’t have money to take care of them over the long term.
 - Different subcommittees had different priorities.
 - A recommendation to move new parks next to activation did not pass.
- Committee Recommendation: Use attached prioritization as order, except for #6 Eliminate Major Maintenance Backlog, #10 Address Property Encroachments, and #36 Magnuson Master Plan Improvements. Those items are tabled for further discussion.

Interim Report

- Staff put together outline, and are currently working on the narrative.
- Comments on outline
 - Should be articulated how PLCAC report correlates with the Parks Legacy Plan
 - Not just partnerships that are important—fees, etc. There are other smaller scale measures that we should keep on the radar.

- What's the difference between having an internal auditor and an external auditor?
 - Christopher Williams: it would give us the ability to complete more audits, and it sets a tone in the organization.
- It would be great to calculate performance measures and compare them to other cities.
 - Christopher Williams: an annual report card on earned income, customer service improvements, etc.

Public comment, continued:

Donna Hartmann-Miller: Bundle 3, "Activation" should have off-leash dog areas. Regarding acquisition bundle, this should be a high priority as the City becomes denser and land prices could increase. Regarding developing land-banked parks, we should focus on sites in gaps and underserved areas.